



COUNCIL MINUTES

May 7, 2009

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on May 7, 2009 at 7:55 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Scott Smith
Alex Finter
Dina Higgins
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Dave Richins
Scott Somers

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner
Linda Crocker

1. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the FY 2009-2010 Human Services Funding including but not limited to allocating funds based on the Community Safety Support Investment Model and determining agency funding levels.

Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa advised that staff was present to provide information on the Community Safety Support Investment Model, and he introduced Human Services Specialist Lisa Wilson.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Community Safety Support Investment Model was adopted by the Council in 2005. She displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) that outlined the programs supported by this funding model in Fiscal Year 2008/2009 as listed below:

- Central Arizona Shelter Services (emergency shelter for single women).
- Child Crisis Center (emergency shelter for children).
- A New Leaf, which includes:
 - Autumn House (shelter for victims of domestic violence).
 - East Valley Men's Center (transitional and emergency shelter for men).
 - La Mesita (shelter for homeless families).
 - Client Services (emergency rent, utility, and mortgage assistance to Mesa residents).
- Mesa Boys & Girls Club (operates the Teen Center, which teaches youth coping skills and gang prevention).
- United Food Bank (Food Link provides emergency foods boxes to Mesa residents).

- Community Bridges (assists residents seeking substance abuse treatment).
- Save the Family (transitional housing for families while helping them become self-sufficient).
- Mesa Family YMCA (court-ordered peer counseling for youth committing minor first offenses).
- East Valley Senior Services (delivers meals to homebound seniors and elderly).
- Marc Center of Mesa (on-the-job training for individuals with developmental, physical and mental disabilities).

Mr. Wilson advised that although the following programs were considered for funding, no funds were allocated in the 2008/2009 budget:

- East Valley Senior Services
 - Assistance for Independent Living/Caring Corp (in-home volunteers to assist the elderly).
 - Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (placement services and mileage reimbursement to seniors seeking volunteer opportunities with assistance).
- Care Partnership (pediatric health care for individuals without insurance).
- House of El-Elyon (housing and case management for unwed teens).

City Manager Christopher Brady noted that that the budgeted programs address areas that interact with Public Safety personnel. He advised that staff's recommendation is to continue the programs and focus on these areas. Mr. Brady said that staff would seek additional funding opportunities through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). He noted that contributions to the ABC (A Better Community) fund on utility bills have declined in the past year.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commended staff for being able to maintain funding for these non-profit agencies, and he expressed support for the Community Safety Model. He suggested that the ABC Program be revisited, and he noted that he was the original sponsor of the Program. He complimented Mr. Brady and staff for their efforts.

Mayor Smith explained that the Community Safety Model supports the funding of programs that prevent Public Safety issues from developing into more serious situations that require Police or Fire Department intervention at a later date. He expressed support for this cost-effective approach to meeting the needs of the community.

Ms. Wilson noted that an important aspect of this model is that the agencies provide programs that develop self-sufficiency.

Mayor Smith said that the consensus of the Council was that staff move forward with the recommendation presented.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Mr. Brady clarified that although staff's funding recommendation for the next year is less than the current year because of the decreased ABC contributions, the General Fund contribution remains the same and staff will seek additional funding through the CDBG process.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on budget issues, including, but not limited to:

- a. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on transit services, including Dial-a-Ride.

Transportation Director Dan Cleavenger introduced Deputy Transportation Director Mike James and advised that staff would address issues related to transit policy. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office), and he noted that one of the Council's Strategic Initiatives referenced the leadership and regional cooperation that is required to address challenges, such as transportation. Mr. Cleavenger quoted the Transit Division's Mission Statement as follows: "Enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors of all abilities by providing a safe and efficient transit system."

Mr. James reported that the City has thirteen arterial bus routes and six express routes along with the downtown circulator, The Buzz. He stated that the City currently has one LINK on Main Street and that another is scheduled to be operational on Country Club Drive in July of 2010.

Responding to a question from Mayor Smith, Mr. James explained that "LINK" is the name designated by Valley Metro for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service because it links to the Light Rail Transit system.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Mr. James advised that the LINK has limited stops and provides a faster connection to the Light Rail Transit system. He said that the arterial bus route service has many more stops and is able to connect passengers to a LINK bus stop.

Mr. James addressed a question from Councilmember Higgins by advising that presently the LINK has fewer riders than the arterial buses. He noted that as more detailed ridership information becomes available, it may be possible to adjust local bus routes.

Councilmember Somers requested that Mr. James comment on Title 6 and the impact of Title 6 on bus routes.

Mr. James explained that Title 6 relates to social equity to protect low income and minority populations. He reported that all of Mesa's routes, except the Gilbert Road route, are covered by Title 6. He added that the Gilbert Road route does not qualify under Title 6 because there are fewer minority and low income residents along the route

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that bus service during the week is every 30 minutes; that the LINK and Route 40 along Main Street operate at one-hour intervals on the weekends, alternating every 30 minutes; and that buses operate at 30 minute intervals during peak demand hours in the mornings and afternoons.

Mr. James summarized that transit costs, which are controlled by the Regional Public Transit Authority (RPTA), are increasing while both City and Prop 400 sales tax revenues are decreasing. He said that staff is working with RPTA to identify some savings. Mr. James explained that lower Prop 400 revenues result in a greater financial burden on the City to fund Dial-A-Ride service. He noted that as the aging population increases over the next 30 years, Dial-A-Ride and special needs transportation will be a critical issue. Mr. James reported that transit ridership across the country is the highest in 50 years.

Councilmember Finter suggested that staff make transit information regarding fares and cost savings available to the public.

Mr. James noted that staff is not seeking Council policy direction at this meeting. He reviewed some proposed bus service adjustments, such as shortening Route 30, eliminating the last evening run on the City-funded routes, changing the Buzz to a one-hour frequency on Saturday, and eliminating Saturday service on Route 108.

In response to concerns expressed by Councilmember Higgins regarding the elimination of Route 30 service to the Multigenerational Center and service to Mesa Community College Red Mountain Campus, Mr. Brady stated that staff would review the situation.

Mr. James noted that the Region has delayed implementing bus service on the route that includes MCC due to lower Prop 400 revenues.

Mr. Brady said that staff could discuss other options with MCC.

Mayor Smith stated the opinion that the present system is not sustainable. He noted that a desirable future connection would be between the MCC Red Mountain campus and Arizona State University Polytechnic as well as other educational facilities. He further stated that the situation is difficult because the City lacks a defined revenue source and has no control over the costs.

Mr. James advised that staff proposes to maintain the existing paratransit service levels for the next year and work with the Council to develop options and alternatives for long-term transit service.

Councilmember Somers said that another issue that needs to be addressed is the creation of a stable Council policy addressing transportation policies. He stated the opinion that the City should have a public process regarding these issues.

Councilmember Kavanaugh commended staff for doing a good job in difficult times. He concurred that the Council should establish a stable transportation policy that addresses the demands of an aging population. He added that land use decisions should be considered, transportation corridors should be identified and efforts should be expended to address methods of encouraging individuals who need services to live in these corridors. Councilmember Kavanaugh expressed support for staff's recommendations.

Councilmember Richins expressed concurrence with Councilmember Kavanaugh's comments regarding land use decisions.

Mayor Smith said he agreed with many of the comments made by the Councilmembers. He suggested that he would like to develop a plan for specific transit corridors that complies with Federal law and identifies where future transit services would be available. Mayor Smith stated that the current model of service is not sustainable. He said that in the future, residents who require transportation services may have to locate in areas where the services are available. He added that the Zoning Update could incorporate the present transit corridors and the location of future transit corridors, which could provide some certainty to residents regarding the availability of transportation services in specific areas of the City. Mayor Smith noted that the budget would be maintained for the 2009/2010 budget and that the issue would be addressed in the 2010/2011 budget.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Richins regarding the General Plan Update, Mr. Brady said that transportation issues are included in that process. He said that staff would like to work with the Council on developing a strategy, which can be integrated into the General Plan.

In response to concerns expressed by Councilmember Richins regarding the elimination of bus service to the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center, Mr. James stated that although he did not have the information with him, he would provide the data to the Council.

Mayor Smith said that the consensus of the Council was to maintain the current budget in 2009/2010, and he thanked staff for the presentation.

b. Update 2009/10 Budget Timeline.

Budget Director Chuck Odom presented the Fiscal Year 2009/10 Budget Timeline (see Attachment 1).

City Manager Christopher Brady advised that the anticipated amount of Federal Stimulus funding would be included in the tentative budget in order to accommodate the expenditure of those funds. He noted that although many budget reductions have been implemented, the budget may appear to be larger because of the Stimulus funding.

Vice Mayor Jones explained that State law requires that the tentative budget indicate the potential or the maximum amount of the proposed budget and that the amount of the final budget would probably be less.

Councilmember Somers recommended that the City Auditor review the Federal Stimulus funding and expenditures on a continuous basis to ensure that the City is complying with all of the Federal requirements.

Mr. Brady noted that although City Auditor Gary Ray plans to retire, the staff in that office is very competent and capable of monitoring the Federal Stimulus funding and expenditures.

3. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Mayor Smith: Employee Service Awards Event.

Councilmember Richins: Neighbor Works Symposium on sustainability.

Vice Mayor Jones: American Gas Association meeting in Washington, D.C.

Councilmember Higgins: District 5 Building Strong Neighborhoods Event.

4. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Friday, May 8, 2009, 11:00 a.m. – Mesa United Way Luncheon

Saturday, May 9, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – City Hall at the Mall – Fiesta Mall Center Court

Thursday, May 14, 2009, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Friday, May 15, 2009, 5:00 p.m. – Kino Pool Grand Opening

Monday, May 18, 2009, TBA – Study Session

Monday, May 18, 2009, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

5. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 7th day of May, 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachment (1)